



Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Roles and Responsibilities

This document summarizes both statutory and agreed-upon roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in the work of the Children's Commission. Those items that are specified in statute are indicated with an asterisk (*). The remainder of the document has been agreed upon and approved by a majority vote of the members of the Children's Commission.

1. Commission as a Body
2. Commission Members
3. Commission Chair
4. Executive Committee
5. Standing Committees and Task Forces
6. Executive Director

1. Commission as a Body

- Study and evaluate issues related to vulnerable youth*
- Review and make recommendations concerning legislation*
- Promote information sharing, best practices, policies, and programs*
- Cooperate with other child-focused commissions, the judicial branch of government, the executive branch of government, stakeholders, and members of the community*
- Submit a report by September 1 of each year to the Legislative Council, the Governor, and the Chief Justice*
- The affirmative votes of a majority of voting members are required for the Commission to take action.*
- The Commission shall follow Roberts Rules of Order.

2. Commission Members

- Make every effort to attend all meetings
- Make every effort to review provided materials in advance of meeting
- Act in the best interests of Indiana's vulnerable youth
- In instances of a conflict between a member's personal professional opinion and that of the agency or governmental entity he or she represents, it is understood that a member may abstain from voting, or clarify in which capacity he or she casts a vote on a particular action.

*Designated in Indiana Code 2-5-36.

3. Commission Chair

Chairmanship of the Commission rotates among the three branches of government annually by calendar year.* The three rotating chairs are: the judge or justice appointed by the Chief Justice of Indiana, a legislative member of the Commission designated by the chairperson of the legislative council to serve as Commission chair, and the member of the Governor's staff appointed by the Governor.* In the years of legislative chairmanship, if it is an odd year, the chair shall be from the Senate, and if an even year, from the House. Responsibilities include:

- With assistance from the executive director, determines agenda for the Executive Committee
- With assistance from the executive director and Executive Committee, determines the agenda for the Commission.*
- Chairs/facilitates Commission meetings and Executive Committee meetings. In case of unavoidable absence, designates another member of the Commission to chair the meeting.
- Provides guidance to the executive director
- Reviews and approves Commission press releases
- With assistance from executive director and the Executive Committee, proposes Task Force and Committee co-chairs for approval by the Commission.

4. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee helps the Commission accomplish its work in the most efficient manner, facilitating decision making in between Commission meetings or in the case of a crisis or other urgent circumstances.

Responsibilities include:

- a. Determine Commission's meeting agendas (final authority for the agenda rests with the Commission chair*).
- b. Address specific questions and matters referred to it by the Commission.
- c. Address issues that require preliminary discussion and refinement prior to Commission consideration.
- d. Act on behalf of the Commission on routine matters that arise between regular Commission meetings and in urgent situations that cannot wait for the next full Commission meeting.
- e. Act as liaison with the executive director.
- f. Provide counsel, feedback and support to the executive director as needed.
- g. Facilitate the annual assessment of the executive director.
- h. Review compensation and benefits of the executive director.
- i. Provide regular, thorough and timely reports of its actions to the Commission.

Of note:

- The Executive Committee should limit itself to making decisions on a limited, as-needed basis.
- The Executive Committee reports to and is accountable to the full Commission and is not a replacement for the full Commission.
- The Executive Committee should report all decisions and actions taken to the full Commission as soon as possible.

5. Standing Committees and Task Forces

The standing committees of the Children's Commission serve at the pleasure of the Commission and provide support in their area of expertise for the Commission's task forces and members as needed for execution of the Commission's strategic plan.

There are five standing committees:

1. Data Sharing & Mapping
2. Communications

* Designated in Indiana Code 2-5-36.

3. Child Services Oversight

4. Equity, Inclusion, and Cultural Competence

5. Child Trauma and Resilience

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The task forces of the Children’s Commission serve at the pleasure of the Commission and provide research, consultation, deliberation, and recommendations in their area of expertise as needed for execution of the Commission’s strategic plan.

There are four task forces:

1. Child Health and Safety
2. Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth
3. Mental Health and Substance Abuse
4. Educational Outcomes

Each task force shall include one member who has expertise and a professional role related to equity, inclusion, and cultural competence, as well as a member who has expertise and a professional role related to child trauma and resilience.

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All standing committees and task forces have the following general responsibilities:

- *Co-Chairpersons, appointment and terms.* The Committee or Task Force may have a single chair or two co-chairpersons. Co-chairs are appointed by the Commission on a voluntary basis for a term of two years. Co-chairs may be asked and accept to serve a second two-year term. After two consecutive two-year terms, a co-chair must step down and a new co-chair be appointed. Former co-chairs may serve as members of task forces and committees if appointed by the current co-chairs. Former co-chairs may be re-appointed to that role after a period of one year out of the role, if so desired by the Commission.
- *Co-chairpersons, responsibilities.*
 - Appoint Committee or Task Force members.
 - Finalize meeting time, location, and agenda. This information should be finalized at least five days in advance of meetings and forwarded to Commission Staff for posting on the Commission’s website.
 - Facilitate Committee/Task Force meetings or appoint a facilitator.
 - Record minutes, to include date, time and place of meetings; members present and absent, and a brief summary of discussion. A template is provided. A copy of approved minutes should be forwarded to Commission Staff for posting on the website.
 - Appoint subcommittees as needed, and ensure subcommittees are meeting their objectives and timeframes for task completion.
 - Communicate with the executive director on recommendations and progress.
 - Attend Commission meetings and give reports on the work of the Committee or Task Force as scheduled.
 - Submit an Annual Report no later than June 1 of each year regarding the work of the Committee or Task Force during the previous year. A template is provided
- *Staffing.* Committee and Task Force Co-Chairs are responsible for staffing their meetings, either directly or through identification of a staffing resource under their direction.

- *Member Terms:* Membership terms shall be for at least one year, beginning from the time of appointment. Members can be added as needed throughout the year. Renewing terms are at the discretion of the Committee or Task Force Co-Chairs. Members who find themselves unable to fulfill their obligations are encouraged to step down and suggest a replacement from their agency or field of expertise.
- *Responsibilities and Ways of Work for Committee and Task Force Members:* By accepting appointment, Committee and Task Force members agree to:
 - Make a good faith effort to attend meetings.
 - Commit to review materials and attend meetings prepared to discuss the topics at hand, and participate fully.
 - Give advice and make recommendations.
 - When speaking with others outside the Committee or Task Force, members should indicate they are not speaking on behalf of the Committee or Task Force, or the Commission, and should present only their own views.
 - Committee and Task Force members will serve without compensation.
- *Values of the Committee or Task Force*
 - The Committee/Task Force is intended to be a collaborative entity. Transparency is valued and expected.
 - The Committee/Task Force values innovation and excellence.
 - The Committee/Task Force seeks to create outputs and decisions which are well thought out and inclusive of internal staff and system partners/stakeholders, are trauma-informed, and which incorporate an equity lens.
- *Meetings.* Committees and Task Forces are recommended to meet bimonthly, during the months that fall between Commission meeting months.
- *Decision Making and Reporting.* Formal recommendations of the Committee or Task Force shall be decided by majority. The Commission has final decision-making authority on all recommendations.
- *Communication with the Executive Director and the Executive Committee.* The Commission executive director will facilitate all communication between the Task Force/Committee and the Commission, including the Executive Committee. Committee and Task Force chairs will keep the executive director informed of their needs, questions, and recommendations, and the executive director will provide the necessary connection to the Commission. The executive director will communicate deadlines and formats for Task Force and Committee recommendations and presentations to the Commission. Task Force and Committee co-chairs may request to attend an Executive Committee meeting if they have a question or need guidance on a particular topic or potential Commission agenda item.
- *Minutes.* Minutes shall be kept at every meeting of the Committee or Task Force and distributed to its members for review prior to the next meeting. The co-chairs will designate someone to take and distribute meeting minutes. Committees and Task Forces will utilize the Commission Meeting Minutes template. The approved meeting minutes will be submitted to Commission Staff for inclusion on the Commission website within one week of final approval.
- *Specialized Subcommittees.* The Committee or Task Force may form such subcommittees or workgroups it believes necessary to complete its work. A specialized subcommittee should consist of select members of the Committee and such other persons who the co-chairs believe will assist in a full exploration of the issue under review. Where possible the Committee/Task Force will identify key system partners and stakeholders to participate on subcommittees.

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Subcommittees should remain relatively small in size, generally not exceeding 3-6 members. Once it is determined that a subcommittee is needed, the Task Force or Committee will ensure that clear objectives and timeframes for completion of the subcommittee task(s) are identified and agreed upon. A lead person will be identified for each subcommittee and will report to the Task Force or Committee chairs on a regular basis. This person will ensure that the subcommittee is moving forward with completion of their task(s) within the indicated timeframe(s). The Task Force or Committee co-chairs and subcommittee lead will be responsible for ensuring that bi-directional communication occurs between the subcommittee and the larger Task Force or Committee.

6. Executive Director

- Responsible for the oversight of operations and the implementation of goals and objectives of the Commission
- Provides guidance on behalf of the Commission to members of the General Assembly by attending meetings and other events concerning legislation related to children, including testifying on behalf of the Commission
- Coordinates the response to public inquiries related to the mission, activities, and goals of the Commission in conjunction with the appropriate Departments
- Assists the Commission in the development and implementation of strategic goals, objectives, policies and procedures;
- Tracks all legislation, state and federal, related to the status of children in Indiana.
- Works to meet the priorities of the Commission throughout the committees and task forces of the Commission
- Drafts reports to the Legislative Council on goals, achievements, and requests of the Commission
- Develops the Commission annual report in conjunction with the Office of Communication, Outreach and Education
- Proposes candidates for task force and committee co-chairs to the Commission
- Staffs the Executive Committee and the Commission
- Serve and represent as an expert resource on availability of services
- Available to oversee or assist in drafting legislation when appropriate
- Promotes best practices and policies throughout the state
- Seeks opportunities to measure and increase the Commission's impact
- Monitors national research and policy trends in children's issues
- Ensure the guidelines and processes of the Indiana Office of Court Services are implemented as required.
- Performs all duties necessary and requested to meet the mission and vision of the CommissionTracks state and federal legislation related to the status of children in Indiana
 - With the consent of the Executive Committee, speaks for and works on behalf of the Commission by providing information to members of the General Assembly, attending meetings and other events concerning legislation related to children, and testifying on behalf of the Commission.
 - Assists the Commission in managing its administrative needs, including scheduling of events and overseeing logistics of events
 - Assists the Commission in the development and implementation of strategic goals, objectives, policies, and procedures
 - Studies and makes recommendations to the Commission and to the General Assembly on ways to improve services to the children of Indiana
 - Serves as liaison with and between the judicial, executive, and legislative branches of government, state and local officials, children's service providers and agencies, and the public, including responding to public inquiries about the mission, activities, and goals of the Commission
 - Works with each committee and task force of the Commission to ensure coordination of services, projects, and information
 - Is responsible for the format, content, and distribution of the Annual Report of the Commission
 - Provides reports to the Legislative Council on goals, achievements, and requests of the Commission
 - Works to ensure that the priorities of the Commission are being met throughout the committees and task forces of the Commission
 - Promotes best practices, policies, and programs throughout the state

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- Is an expert resource on availability of services
- Is proactive in foreseeing what tasks should be taken on by the executive director in order to meet the mission and vision of the Commission
- Performs all duties necessary and requested to meet the mission and vision of the Commission